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THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION.

"THE history of education is the history of civilization," says my wise friend; "it has never been written and therefore cannot be taught to advantage." Few will deny that it is not taught to advantage in our country, but most will assign other reasons for this failure, chief among which must be a common disregard of the value and importance of the subject. Compared with the history of philosophy, literature, mathematics, and science, it receives but little attention; yet if the whole and the parts may be set against each other, it is of more importance than they. Possibly no subject which is taught at present so much deserves a protagonist. What possibilities does it offer? What uses can it serve? Where and how should it be taught? These questions merit attention. The history of education is the history of man's efforts to perpetuate and extend the values which the society of his time has acquired. It is not the history of civilization, for civilization in part, like the wind, bloweth where it listeth, and man notes its presence and knoweth not whence it cometh. Often it moves contrary to his efforts. Where he would blot it out, it takes him captive. It passes in part without effort. It germinates and flowers as an earth habit, but education differs as a conscious struggle for accommodation. It is a part of the history of civilization—the most valuable part of it; a narrative of the conscious struggle of the race, a study of "the last and highest form of evolution." Discipline the senses, train the observation, has long been a prevailing cry among schoolmen, and it has wrought its good result; but, in the words of Herbart, "the fact is that sense perception does not require attention by any means as much, nor as absolutely and necessarily, as do all matters of feeling—history, morals, religion, all that concerns mankind;" and of all that concerns mankind, man's labor for man's good is not far from the most important part. If the end of education be virtue, as Herbart maintained, and if virtue be a thing of effort, and if man needs guidance and inspiration

in order to attain it, then is the history of education a necessary and profitable study, for no other study attempts to trace his conscious struggle for improvement as this one does. If the chief value of history lies in the fact that it exhibits the elevation of human character, the history of man's conscious efforts to elevate his character must be instructive indeed. Mathematics and philology, science and political history, are hardly likely to awaken broad intellectual interests, hardly likely to set copy for human imitation in the conduct of life, hardly likely to become vehicles for transmitting the spirit of the past. And what is true of them is also in part true of philosophy and literature. They are too prone to exhibit results, not processes. It is the business of the history of education to supply the background for their pictures—to show Homer and Plato working upon the Greek mind, to do the same thing for the Torah, the Testament, and the Qu'ran; and this is no small service to the cause of human culture.

It is true that it is exceedingly difficult to delimit this subject. A large part of its material belongs also to the history of philosophy, as in Greece and the Middle Ages. Another part is bound up with the history of politics and law, as Alexandrian and Roman education. Another part is but an aspect of the history of the Christian church—education during the Dark Ages. And still another part can hardly be separated from the general history of its time and place, as the education of the Jewish and Moslem peoples, or of the greater Renaissance. Only in modern times does education seem to have differentiated itself sufficiently to have an exhaustive history of its own; and this thought, fallacious though it be, seems to have been foremost in the minds of those who have written upon the subject, for, while professing to write its history, they have been content to treat most of its aspects by implication and to leave their subject for the most part to those who approach it only indirectly. At the present time, when the history of the world is being rewritten from the standpoint of motive, the intellectual motive is found to be so important that it begins to have a worthier treatment, and the history of the educational efforts of

the past begins to be regarded as something other than a side issue to general history—a mere by-play in the absorbing drama in which kings, popes, and tyrants are wont to hold the center of the stage. For, if man is a rational animal, his efforts to appear rational are his most characteristic acts, and, in place of being tacked on to the other aspects of his life, deserve a separate treatment. It may be replied that a number of works have been written in English to meet this requirement. Quite true, but by a strange perversity their authors have been content almost wholly to disregard the conditions which produced the results which they report, and for the most part have written mere catalogues of emotional facts, so didactic and so brief as to appear but insipid and profitless studies to those more courageous pupils even who dare to approach them. Because of this fact the rumor has gone abroad among prospective students that the subject is not worth studying, that it is insufferably dull, and that its subject-matter is not important. That same lack of thoroughness which has done so much to bring all forms of the study of education into disrepute has been operative here. That study which should be an accepted guide in the ordering and evaluating of the facts of history, is ordinarily treated as mere padding in the work of a college department. That study which every college student and everyone who makes claim to general culture should be familiar with, because it enables him as no other can to get the spiritual bequests of the ages in proper perspective, is pursued by a chosen few and for no other reason, which is clear to them, than that it helps to fill up the measure of the course of study which they have chosen.

The history of education cannot long remain in this condition. The things of which it treats have ever been so intimately bound up with the issues of life, its subject-matter is so rich, its fortunes have been so varied, and its facts have so rare a dramatic interest, that it is difficult to understand how it could have been made so uninteresting and unimportant as it has been made. Its chief theme is the influence of Greece. Its first chapters must tell how the love of learning grew there and how the agencies for its propagation took enduring-form in Athens,

Sparta, Crete, Magna Grecia, Alexandria, Marseilles, Antioch, Edessa, and many other places of the eastern world. It must then show how "the greatness of the Roman character broke through the narrow exclusiveness of savage nationality by bending in its hour of conquest to the intellect of conquered Greece," and became a world-empire, giving to education in return the undying permanence of her own organized life. It must then state, as clearly and distinctly as may be, the attitude of the new faith to the old learning, and trace the unceasing devotion of the church to letters during those six hundred years of agony in which she molded barbarous Europe to the form of civilization. Then must be studied the extensive educational labors of the Jewish and Moslem churchmen which saved for and presented to Christian Europe the wisdom books of the Greeks, which in the time of her too youthful self-confidence the church had thrown away. The uses which the church made of this new-found wisdom, *i. e.*, the lesser Renaissance—the period of the founding of the universities—must next be treated, then the revival of humanism—the greater Renaissance and the Reformation which came of it; or how Greece once again "rose from the dead with the New Testament in her hand and breathed into the kindred spirits of the great Teutonic races such love of free inquiry and of liberty" that they broke the bonds of the past and launched out upon a new national life. Then must follow a discussion of the counter-reformation—and a careful account of the growth of educational criticism which then began to form the body of present-day educational doctrine, and which accounts for the educational practices of our own time.

Such a scheme as this, when properly carried out, will do more to exhibit the unity of human efforts than years of study of political history. It will teach the student that the world is one in its struggle for the good. That the Moslem church is different from the Christian church, and that the synagogue is different from both, most know—and most know but little more about the matter, and their knowledge leads only to religious pride and narrow hatred which divide these different churches. The history of education will tell how generation after genera-

tion of these three peoples "with a book" constantly read their texts, labored to memorize their words, struggled over their doubtful passages, and treasured up all which they contained as saving truth. The history of education will tell how, under the inspiration of religion, universal teaching went on among each people, and how the thought grew with one as with the other that the greatest service which man could render to his fellow-man was to teach him. It will also tell of heroic sacrifices which were made for the truth. Of heroic labors which were undertaken to multiply the vehicles of knowledge; and it will show how through effort the national life was constantly guided by the wisdom of the past. The superficial reader may note only the differences which kept the followers of the three great prophets of God apart, but the student who has been brought to feel their self-denying devotion to their wisdom cannot fail mentally to strike hands with them and henceforth to regard them with something of the sympathy due to fellow-laborers; for their struggles after God touch our hearts as their doctrines cannot. There is no study in which the humanity of the world appears so clearly. "The greatest reverence is due to a child," said Juvenal, and the genuine worth of past and present peoples is nowhere so satisfactorily registered as in their care for the young, and the spectacle which it affords is not unmoving. Indeed, of all the humanities this surely is the most humanizing.

Again, whether society is an organism, is still, perhaps, a debatable question, but it is not a debated question that a given society must draw its life from wide spatial and temporal limits. The environment in which a human being lives has three dimensions, and perhaps the most important of these is that intangible thing which we call the past. To study history is to come into closer contact with one's own environment. To study the history of education is to come into closer contact with the developing intellectual gains of the race. The history of education must describe the racial experimenting which produced the different forms of knowledge. It must tell of the needs which led to their development piece by piece. It will thus point out the superior social value which gave each subject a place in the course of study.

He who would analyze the uses of history undertakes a well-nigh impossible task. The difficulties which beset him are due to its immensity of value. It is the treasury of the race. It contains the methods as well as the results of past human experimenting. It is sometimes said that the history of education is inspirational; and there is need for this. What education most lacks in the minds of those who follow it is strength and dignity. The teacher is held in little esteem; he holds himself in little esteem. It is an old tale. The remedy lies, not in changing the attitude of society, but first in changing the attitude of the teacher. I know of nothing which will do this so effectually as some knowledge of the army of the redeeming to which he belongs. To follow that form of service in which Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle delighted, in which Jerome and Augustine gained distinction, which Alcuin, John the Scot, and Gerbert, the greatest of their time followed, to know that one does it for the same reason as they—surely this is a reason for professional pride. It was not wholly by whim and caprice that the despised school-masters of Rome became ministers and friends of emperors in the latter days of the empire. And possibly some knowledge of the blessings which are pronounced upon those who impart the truth, in the Talmud of the Jews and the traditions of the Prophet, may do something to show how the princes of the earth are wont to look upon this calling.

But the history of education is not merely inspirational, though some are wont to say so. It is directive also. It alone will teach the purpose and meaning of the school. In it the teacher may see the principles which govern his calling writ large. What must be taught and why, it teaches both by the practice and by the neglect which it describes. It states the attitudes and outlines the methods of the great teachers of humanity. How Socrates drove home the necessity for a scientific understanding of conduct; how Plato regarded the content of right teaching and gave his property as an endowment for education. How Aristotle taught the boy Alexander, implanting in his young mind such a respect for learning as to lead the man to cause the schools of Alexandria to be founded and to plant cen-

ters of learning in many Asiatic cities; how the great Quintilian taught oratory to the youth of Rome, and what practices in the teaching of literature he prescribed for the men of his time; how the wise fathers of the church chose with zealous care the non-corrupting learning of the past and taught it to the future leaders of the church; how many a daring priest and pious monk mid the din of war dared still to teach it from the fall of Rome even to the founding of the universities — these things are more than inspiring; they are a part of the best practice of the world. He who would teach must have this training, but such knowledge is indispensable, not only to teachers, but to all who are being led to respect the efforts which man has made to acquire knowledge. It is an invaluable adjunct to the study of literature, for it tells what the writings of the past meant to the men of the past, and how they were received and passed on to us. It is essential to the student of philosophy, for it traces the currents of human interest which carried the inspiring words of the masters through strangely devious channels to the shores of the modern world. The growth of mathematics, too, was but a phase of the larger intellectual activity which it describes, and cannot be adequately comprehended apart from it. And from it the student of science may learn that science is not altogether modern, and by contrast may come to a better appreciation of his own efforts. Besides he may learn something of the worth of other human interests, and be taught to regard other forms of effort with patience.

How shall this subject be taught? Not certainly by picking out those parts of it "which bear directly upon present-day problems of education," for every part of it bears directly upon present-day education. What are called "present-day problems" are simply kaleidoscopic turns in the totality of human interest. As well might the historian of political institutions be told to teach only those aspects of human history which are consciously included in the political discussions of the present day. The men of the past did not discuss the relation of the high school to the university, or whether teachers should be trained in the normal school or in the university. Neither did

they seek to perplex themselves over the disciplinary value of language study or the desirability of "making the subjects interesting." If they had done so, the chances are that those problems would not be ours today, at any rate not in their present form. But their whole practice would not have borne less directly upon whatever problems might be perplexing us. The student of education must know their results to know what is settled in his subject as well as to get guidance in the clearing up of what is still doubtful. As well might the student of philosophy be told to confine himself to his Hume, Kant, and Hegel, as the student of education to give attention merely to that part of his subject in which present-day problems take on their present-day forms. Philosophers are not made in that way, neither can well-equipped educators be made in this. To be resourceful, critical, inventive, and cultured in his calling, he must know it in its completeness; in its breath, not in its narrowness; in its highest, not in its lowest terms. There is no danger that he may know too much of it, but constant danger that it be made too mechanical to be genuinely helpful. It is a just criticism upon most of the histories that have been written upon the subject that they are accounts of what men thought about the subject, not of what was done by the teachers of the past. Vital theory must grow out of practice, and to be genuinely serviceable it must not be abstracted from the practice which supplies its meaning. The history of educational theories must not be cut away from the history of educational practice. The history of education must state causes as well as effects, and state them in the same volume and in the order in which they appeared in human consciousness.

It remains to glance at the instruments at hand for the teaching of this subject. The bulk of the English works upon it are unsatisfactory. Mr. Rashdall's great work on the *Universities of Europe* must be at once excepted and Mr. Symond's volume on the *Revival of Learning*, though not in all respects what it should be, has many points to commend it. Perhaps exception should also be made in favor of the volumes in the "Great Educators" series.

Yet even they do not meet our wants. They do not cover the whole field, and they do not treat the part which they cover in an entirely satisfactory manner. One gets a far better idea of the extent of Greek education from Dr. Hatch's "Hibbert Lectures" than from Mr. Davidson's *Aristotle*, while Roman education, important as it is, goes largely by default. Mr. West's *Alcuin* is hardly an adequate account of the educational labors of the churchmen. The continuity of educational efforts is not sufficiently detailed in the series. Its very name seems to indicate that more attention is given to its intervals of brilliancy than to its constancy. While on his death-bed, Mr. Davidson wrote *A History of Education* which is hardly open to this criticism. Interpreting education as conscious evolution and giving attention to the more neglected aspects of its development, it is in many respects the best book yet written upon the subject. It is rich in inductions, but far too brief in its statement of facts upon which they are based. We cannot soon forget the inestimable legacy which Mr. Davidson has conferred upon our generation in his last will and testament contained in the concluding chapter of this book. This alone would make the work indispensable, and, when joined to the splendid inductions of the text, it makes it a masterpiece; but not of history; for history is first of all a broad statement of facts, and then an exposition of their meaning. Its facts must be stated *in extenso*; else the interpretations which are offered will remain in the air. The history of education is a large subject; it cannot be stated briefly. The size of a recent work commends it. I refer to Mr. Monroe's *Source Book of the History of Education*. A volume of goodly proportions is devoted to the Greek and Roman period. This book is a welcome contribution to the literature of the subject. Its great merits are apparent, yet in certain respects it is not all that could be desired. One is inclined to change Mark Pattison's remark, "History cannot be written from MSS.," into, "History cannot be studied from source books," for they are apt to contain so much that is not directly pertinent as to be confusing, and so little that is as not to be enlightening. And this, in brief, is my criticism upon this book. It is not a history of educational practices, but a good

statement of the theory of ancient education. The cataloguing summaries which introduce the sections are not sufficiently dramatic to show what the quotations meant in terms of action. Other excerpts would have to be substituted for parts of those included here or added to this list to portray the full reality of ancient teaching. In the first place, the beginnings of education in Greece are not properly presented. No mention is made of Cheiron's school, though to the minds of the Greeks it evidently represented the first departure from unorganized social imitation, and as such it is an important landmark from which to survey the field of conscious education. Then, too, a number of passages from Lucian's *Anacharis* would have been very helpful in explaining how the Greeks regarded the educational practices of their ancestors. Socrates, the most important figure in Greek education, is out of drawing here. There is no adequate account of the extent of Greek education. A number of passages from Diogenes Laertius as to the founding of the philosophical schools—the first endowed educational institutions in history—and some notice of their activity, would have been of assistance. So would certain passages from Eunapius and Philostratus, for they tell more clearly than do the words of Plato and Aristotle how essentially Greek education was. It is this fact which is most important in the history of education, *i. e.*, that it was the essence of Greek life; and this prime fact in the history of education is not sufficiently considered here. The university of Alexandria was certainly one of the most important forms of Greek education, and, if Mommsen's characterization of it be true, one of the best witnesses of the importance which education had assumed in the eyes of the Greeks. And there is not a little evidence that Greek schoolmasters followed in the wake of Alexander's army and planted schools in several cities of Asia. These facts are a part of the history of Greek education and indispensable in tracing the passage of Greek education to the modern world. It was hardly fortunate to omit Strabo's reference to Greek education in Marseilles. How captive Greece took captive her rude conqueror—perhaps the most important chapter in Roman history—is not sufficiently detailed. Nor do I

think it quite a happy arrangement of material to defer a full account of latter Roman education to the volume which deals with the education of the church, for thus Roman education seems to be split in two, and it was not so in fact. The educational writings of Plato are a maze in which the student can hardly find his way without the assistance of copious notes. Mr. Bosanquet's little volume, *The Education of the Young in Plato's Republic*, seems to me to be a far better means of approach to them than that which is offered here. The fact remains that one who would get the most out of this subject must still employ the French and German writers in working back to the original sources.

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